

Kane, Brittany

From: Beth Raccio <braccio@snet.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 9:50 PM
To: AppropriationTestimony
Subject: written testimony: After School Funding

Dear leaders of Connecticut,

PLEASE do not cut the state funding for after school programs in Connecticut. The after school program at Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School in New Haven is a phenomenal program which has made a huge difference in the life of my 17 year old son.

For the past three years, my son has participated in the Co-op after school program every semester. He has been involved with the Improvisation club, the Hip Hop club, an Actors workshop, and has participated in 5 after school theater productions. As a suburban student who has an hour and a half bus ride to and from New Haven every day, the social aspect of these programs helped him to become part of a community of diverse students at a time when teenagers struggle to belong and find their place in the world. The experience he gained by participating in the Co-op after school program even provided the foundation which served to give him the confidence and expertise to audition and be accepted into the Center for Creative Youth summer theater program at Wesleyan in 2012.

There seem to be many athletic after school opportunities, but so few artistic opportunities for students like my son who are not interested in sports. As we begin the college search process, admissions counselors and college applications want to know in what types of extracurricular activities a student has participated. If it were not for the after school opportunities at Co-op, my son would not have any extracurricular activities. This program has not only helped him to grow socially, emotionally, and educationally, but it has helped to increase his marketability to colleges and universities at a time when the application process and scholarship opportunities are so competitive.

And finally, I want to note that as a white, middle class working family living in Wallingford, CT we pay so much money in taxes: state income, federal income, sales tax, and property tax. We are in that group of people that just gets by. We pay our bills but have nothing left over. We do not have a luxurious lifestyle, but also do not qualify for any type of support or services, nor financial aid. The one thing that we benefit from is that our son has the opportunity to attend a publicly funded arts magnet school, and he is able to participate in a wonderful after school program which has enriched his life in more ways than we could ever express. Truly, it has made all the difference in the world to his high school experience and the future he has before him. **PLEASE do not take that away.**

Sincerely,

Beth Raccio, parent
10 Franks Court
Wallingford, CT 06492